

## H1N1 (Swine Flu) Vaccination for Pregnant Women

### **I'm pregnant. Should I get the H1N1 flu vaccine?**

Yes! Flu vaccine is the best way to protect you and your baby against the flu. Pregnant women should get both the H1N1 flu vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine.

### **Why should I get the H1N1 flu vaccine?**

Flu vaccination is very important for pregnant women because they are at high risk of getting very sick if they catch the flu. Pregnant women in the U.S. have died from H1N1 flu.

### **Is the H1N1 vaccine safe for me and my baby?**

Yes. The H1N1 vaccine will be as safe as the seasonal flu shot. The seasonal flu shot has been shown to be safe for pregnant women and babies. The H1N1 flu vaccine has been tested for safety just like the seasonal flu shot.

### **Does the H1N1 flu vaccine contain preservatives?**

The vaccine preservative thimerosal is safe for pregnant moms and their babies. Some thimerosal-free H1N1 flu shots may be available if you prefer to avoid preservative (check with your healthcare provider). It is safe for you to get the vaccine with or without thimerosal.

### **Do I need to get the H1N1 flu shot and the seasonal flu shot?**

Yes. The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect you against H1N1 flu. The H1N1 flu vaccine will not protect you against seasonal flu. You will need to get two separate flu shots to protect you and your baby from both H1N1 and seasonal flu. Pregnant women should get a seasonal flu shot now and a H1N1 flu shot as soon as it becomes available.

### **Which kind of vaccine should I get?**

There are two types of flu vaccine. Pregnant women should get the "flu shot" that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. Pregnant women can't get the other type—nasal spray flu vaccine.

### **What are the possible side effects of the H1N1 flu vaccine?**

Most people will not have side effects. If side effects occur, they will likely be mild. Side effects usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days. These may include mild fever, aches, or soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. As with any medicine, there is a very small chance that an allergic reaction may occur. Serious problems from the flu vaccine are very rare. The risk from the vaccine is much smaller than the risk from the flu. If you have a severe allergy to eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine, you should not get the vaccine.

### **Can my baby get the H1N1 flu vaccine?**

Babies less than 6 months old cannot get a flu vaccine. Everyone who lives with or cares for a baby less than 6 months of age should get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine to protect the newborn baby from the flu.

### **How many doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will I need to get?**

Pregnant women and all other people over the age of 10 will only need one dose of the H1N1 flu vaccine.

### **What else can I do to protect myself and my baby?**

- Everyone you live with should get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine before your baby is born.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay away from people who are sick.

For ongoing updates, go to [www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1) or call the Flu Hotline 877-903-5464, 24 hours/day (English and Spanish)